

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

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4/6/11
HB 518

My Name is Michelle Lewis: Last name spelled: LEWIS
I am from Butte MT

I stand before you today in support of HB518 - a bill for Mental Health Advance Directives.

I am:

- **A Partner**
- **A Mother**
- **A Daughter**
- **A Sister**
- **A Friend**
- **A Neighbor**

I am - A college graduate with a Degree from Texas Tech University.

I am - A Self – Employed Business consultant **working as a Certified Advanced WRAP Facilitator**. WRAP is an acronym for **Wellness Recovery Action Planning©**. I facilitate wellness workshops, as well as, train others to facilitate workshops

I am - A Mental Health Advocate and much more

I am also - A person who has been diagnosed with a serious mental illness

Mental illness does not define my value in this world.

WRAP is an individualized, self-directed, recovery tool that heightens personal awareness and encourages the development of healthy strategies for managing distressing thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

WRAP includes plans for managing crisis.

WRAP© promotes recovery through personal empowerment. It improves the quality of life for individuals with mental health difficulties by promoting Hope, Personal Responsibility, Education, Self-Advocacy, and Support.

Although my partner and I have made plans for psychiatric crisis, they were, by in large, ineffective because they did not have the legitimacy of law. Our family was devastated by our inability to receive appropriate treatment during mental health crisis.

My partner, our daughter, and I have suffered due the lack of a Psychiatric Advanced Directive in Montana.

Mike and I approached Disability Rights Montana because we felt our pre-determined plans in place through WRAP were not acknowledged.

In part, this meeting resulted in the formation of a diverse workgroup for the Psychiatric Advance Directive in Montana.

My partner, my peers and I were valued members of this group as we discussed the elements of this bill in detail with doctors, mental health Center Directors, hospital Administrators, Disability Rights Montana and others.

I strongly believe that, when I am well, it would be beneficial for me to have the ability to provide pre-authorization for treatment, to be utilized in times when I am unable to speak for myself. This would include treatment that has been historically proven to work for me.

I strongly believe that this Advance Directive has the potential to strengthen and enhance partnerships between me and my providers as trusted supporters.

The Advance Directive will allow me to receive early treatment, save tax payer dollars, reduce trauma, and assist me in maintaining my dignity while valuing my family relationships.

It may even save my life.

I Thank you for your time and consideration today.

Please vote yes and support HB518

**Michelle Lewis
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